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A series of developments have occurred in the 1960's which creates a crisis in Catholic elementary schools. Basically the crisis involves a shortage of nun teachers, growing Catholic population, limited finances, the spiraling cost of lay teachers, and a lack of classrooms. These problems are showing their initial effects in Massachusetts and the Boston archdiocese now, somewhat behind the critical stages in other parts of the Nation.

While there seems to be no simple solution, there is a possible historic adjustment to the crisis. A shift in emphasis from elementary education to high school and university education is already taking place. Two reasons why many Catholics believe resources should be devoted to secondary and higher education are: Catholic high schools are far more productive of vocations to the priesthood, sisterhood, and brotherhood than are the lower levels of education, and excellent Catholic colleges and universities are needed to educate a much more highly trained lay population. Upper levels of Catholic education have been able to solve critical problems by being relatively small, regional rather than parish in outreach, academically selective, and financially selective.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: THE QUIET REVOLUTION

An In-Depth Report On The Changing Emphasis In Parochial Schools Of The Boston Archdiocese

by

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"Sister Schools" —Can They Survive?

Catholic elementary schools throughout the nation are in a gathering crisis.

Shortages of nun teachers, the spiraling cost of lay teachers and lack of classrooms, all in the face of a growing Catholic population and limited finances are tying a long-term Gordian knot.

Catholic high schools, on the other hand, have long since given up any attempt at "mass" education and are mostly concentrating on a minority—though a large one—of college-preparatory, tuition-paying students to keep them in business.

In some dioceses nationally, the elementary school situation is already critical.

For example, the Cincinnati diocese, covering southwestern Ohio, this Fall dropped all first grades in parochial schools.

By one single necessary stroke, some 10,000 children were shifted to Cincinnati public schools, itself a warning to public school authorities everywhere not to be shortsighted.

Elsewhere in the nation, at least 160 Caholic elementary schools already have eliminated some classes, including a Milwaukee parish which "phased out" the first four grades.

In addition, both the dioceses of Rochester, N.Y., and St. Louis, Mo., have ordered a ban on the construction of new schools and enlargement of existing schools.

Their bishops felt, due to the critical shortage of nun teachers and lack of money to finance growing numbers of lay teachers, that any further expansion would only lead to deterioration of educational quality.

Here in the Boston archdiocese, Catholic elementary school expansion has slowed almost to a stop.

After 1966 there are no current plans for more parochial elementary schools in a diocese which covers much of eastern Massachusetts, including the counties of Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, Norfolk and most of Plymouth.

Boston More Fortunate

However, the overall situation in the Boston archdiocese is nowhere near as critical—as of now—as in other parts of the country.

But as one leading Catholic educator here put it: "Within 10 years the situation will be just as bad in Massachusetts as in the Midwest, if we expand our elementary schools."

Why is the Boston archdiocese currently enjoying more of a breathing spell from these pressures than any other major city diocese in the nation?

Teachers are the key to the problem, teaching sisters with whom a school can be run much more inexpensively than with salaried lay teachers.

And Greater Boston, one of the oldest and most mature dioceses in the country, has produced more religious vocations, not only to priesthood, but to the sisters' teaching communities than any other American metropolitan area.

What this reflects historically is a devout and heavily Catholic population in Greater Boston with large families and a strong tradition of religious callings.

In sheer numbers, the Catholic population of the 2400-square-mile Boston archdiocese area is 1,767,284, which is just over half of the total population of approximately 3,400,000.

But even now the pressures are building up here.

Vocations Drop Off

In recent years, vocations to the sisters' teaching communities have not been keeping pace with a tremendously expanding population.

Back at the end of World War II there was only one lay teacher to every 25 sisters in Boston archdiocesan schools.

Today the balance has shifted drastically to one lay teacher to every five sisters—and the trend keeps moving steadily.

However, a glance at other sections of the country show that Boston is still in the fortunate position of viewing the gravest problems from afar first, and planning for them.

Numerous other dioceses across the nation have parochial elementary schools with a ratio of only one nun to

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every six, or even eight, lay teachers—all of whom must be paid lay salaries.

There is still another factor which has kept the heat off the Boston archdiocese schools a little longer.

In striking contrast to the high density of the Catholic population here, the percentage of children in Catholic schools is among the lowest of the major United States cities.

Greater Boston's Catholic elementary schools enroll only 22 percent of this school-age population.

Elsewhere, it runs to 26 percent in New York; Chicago, 32 percent; Philadelphia, 33 percent; Pittsburgh, Cleveland and St. Louis, 29 percent, and Milwaukee, 36 percent. (On the other hand, Detroit is 21 percent and Los Angeles and San Francisco, 13 percent.)

This is what gives Boston a more favorable ratio of nuns to pupils—a smaller percentage of children in Catholic schools, combined with a historically heavier proportion of nuns' vocations.

Catholics in Public Schools

Why has Greater Boston had a large percentage of Catholic youngsters in the public schools?

Catholic leaders are quite candid on observing that the heavy Catholic population has had a practical consequence—namely, a high proportion of Catholic teachers in public schools.

Thus there has been little danger, they feel, of Catholic youngsters being exposed to anti-Catholic sentiments. (They are commenting historically on this point, not about any present fears.)

It is noteworthy how many distinguished Boston churchmen and educators are, in whole or in part, the products of the public schools, including Cardinal Cushing.

A brief sampling reveals others: Bishop John Wright, now bishop of Pittsburgh; Very Rev. Michael P. Walsh, S.J., president of Boston College; Rt. Rev. Francis J. Lally, editor of The Pilot; Rt. Rev. Albert W. Low, archdiocesan superintendent of schools, and Rt. Rev. Robert Sennott, chancellor for 10 years and new pastor of St. Catherine's Church, Norwood.

So broad would be the entire list that the public schools appear as productive as the parochial schools here in the fields of religious vocations and church leadership.

Teacher-Pupil Ratios

Now what about the present and unfolding future of Greater Boston's Catholic elementary schools?

To get an idea of the trend, you have to look at the developing teacher-pupil ratios of the last 10 years.

From 1955 to 1963 (the last statistic available), there was a total elementary enrollment jump from 108,957 to 118,876.

These 10,000 extra pupils mean 250 more classes to teach.

Where did these needed teachers come from?

Not from the sisters' teaching communities. During the same years, the numbers of nuns at the elementary level remained almost exactly the same: from 2636, it changed to only 2651.

Speaking only of elementary grades then, the nuns' vocations have maintained their level, but have fallen far behind the school population explosion.

(Keeping the critical national picture yet in mind, this level of sisters' vocations is well ahead of any other section of the United States.)

How Gap Was Filled

What plugged the gap between the 10,000 extra pupils —and almost no rise in nuns?

Lay women and men teachers were hired at an accelerating rate. They rose from 133 to 467, a climb of 334.

This is an increasingly expensive operation. Despite their pay averaging below public school teachers, the cost is well above the annual stipend, board and room of a nun.

Furthermore, these non-religious teachers were added at the heavy ratio (for Catholic schools) of 1 to every 30 pupils in an attempt to reduce overly large class sizes.

If you work over the previous figures, you could jump to the conclusion that the current teacher-pupil ratio is 1 to 40.

But this is simply a mathematical average. It includes principals, supervisors and special teachers.

Class Sizes—45 . . . to 60

What is the real "working" class size of these schools?

Someone who has a good picture is Sister M. Francis Regis, C.S.J., elementary supervisor for the Congregation

of St. Joseph, by far the largest teaching community in this diocese.

The sisters of St. Joseph staff 75 elementary schools as well as 21 high schools in this area. These figures sound enormous, but the schools are usually smaller than comparable public schools.

Regarding class size, Sister M. Francis Regis says, "The diocese doesn't dictate to us, but it doesn't recommend any classes over 50.

"We'd like to hold the maximum at 50, though some run to 60. On the average, they're about 45 to 50.

"Forty, I think, is a very good number, but I know it's impossible," she added. "The pastors have a hard time turning down pupils when their parents support the school."

Asked why 40 was an acceptable size when the public schools are aiming at 30 (and even a few at 25), Sister M. Francis Regis explained:

"The nun's habit inspires an extra respect from youngsters which helps her handle larger classes."

This view, echoed by others associated with Catholic schools, may be a satisfactory answer while sisters make up a majority of the teachers in the Boston archdiocese schools.

Will Standards Hold?

But the question has been legitimately raised: Will this standard still hold true with the rapidly increasing numbers of lay teachers—if they must teach classes of 40 or more?

This is not just a theoretical question.

Lay teachers make up a high proportion of some schools already. Another sister supervisor spoke of a young girl entering the fifth grade "who is so happy because she is going to have a nun for the first time."

A suburban pastor tells of a friend in nearby Connecticut who "hopes his child will have a nun before graduating from school."

"In my own parish," he adds, "the sister superior plans to keep all nuns in the first and eighth grades so she'll have, as she put it, 'first and last crack' at the youngsters."

The question thus arises: How "Catholic" is a Catholic school when lay teachers become the majority of its staff?

If there is "something extra" about a nun teacher, what happens if she eventually becomes a small minority of the faculty?

In this new era of the "emerging layman" in the Catholic church, these may not seem so important questions. But they shift some traditional thinking about Catholic education.

If Nuns Not Available?

The following question was asked of a distinguished Greater Boston pastor who has a large school in his parish:

"If some large new source of funds, such as Federal aid, suddenly allowed the expansion of parochial schools —through hiring of lay teachers—to the point where nuns were only a 'skeletal staff' among the teachers, what direction would you choose?"

He answered without a pause:

"I'd rather close down the parochial elementary schools and see our bright young Catholics go on the staffs of the public schools, where so many already are.

"If we have complaints about the public schools—and I personally think the public schools are good in this community—then we Catholics have a responsibility to improve them."

This churchman's thinking is shared by some Catholics as the critical pressures that have hit Catholic education in other parts of the United States now apparently loom ahead for Greater Boston within the coming decade.

Others disagree. But concern about the future of Catholic elementary schools is getting wider and wider discussion in Catholic circles.

Whatever the outcome, it is stimulating new thought about Catholic schools—and education generally—which can only lead to improvements.

Now the Time to Quit?

Catholicism is in ferment—in the world and in the United States.

Catholic schools, once a bastion of the church in America, are in a crisis greater than that of the public schools.

There is movement of thought everywhere in the Catholic world—dynamic, questioning, powerful; in the minds of many, it is a historic, epochal change taking place.

Four years ago, when the Federal aid to Catholic schools issue first burst upon the national scene, it was still possible to consider this issue alone—in an isolated way.

Now it no longer is possible. Not, within a widening circle of Catholic thinkers and leaders, both lay and clerical, is it any longer desirable.

Some Catholics themselves have even raised the question: Are parochial schools still necessary?

Looking back on the intensity of feelings that surrounded the Federal aid issue—when first presented to Congress in January, 1961—it might well be asked: How did this questioning of continuing the parochial schools take place?

A profound shift has occurred in the relationship of Catholics to non-Catholics, both here and abroad.

The significance of the Pope John era has sunk into the world-wide scene, just as the significance of the election to the presidency of Catholic John Kennedy has permeated American life—an outward act which gave the final authoritative touch to an accomplished fact: that American Catholics were already at the center of the national stage.

It is no coincidence that the Pope John era and the election of a Catholic to the most powerful office in the world were almost simultaneous. They were the visible breaking waves of the same historic tide.

As one Catholic thinker put it: "The great epoch from Martin Luther to Pope John completed a cycle in the history of the Church. The Counter-Reformation is over."

As the 2d Vatican Council continues in Rome this month, it is obvious that this tide is running even stronger.

'Siege Psychology'

The long defensive epoch marked by what was termed the "siege psychology" is ebbing.

Significant here is the fact that the huge American Catholic school system, unique in the world in its size and historic success, was a late flowering of the siege epoch. It grew out of the anti-Catholic climate of the public schools during the second half of the 19th century.

Now, 80 years later, the historic climate has changed. It is against this background that Catholics themselves have begun to reconsider the present and future of their separate schools here.

At the same time, economic and population forces are adding their bite to the argument.

The schools have been undergoing major changes since World War II, some not clearly apparent to the general public or even to all Catholic lay people.

Like public schools, they expanded rapidly in the decade from 1950 to 1960, in response to the postwar baby boom.

Naturally, they grew at a 50 percent greater rate than public schools, reaching a peak of 12 percent of the country's school children in 1962. (In Massachusetts it hit 22 percent.)

But now the percentage has begun to taper off—and will continue to—as Catholic elementary school expansion is almost halted though the population zooms upward.

Observing the past 20 years, one prominent Greater Boston pastor commented: "When I was a young priest in the 1940's, we tried to 'sell' Catholic education to the parents. Now we don't know where to put the youngsters."

In a sense the Catholic schools today are a victim of their own success—and the population explosion.

There simply are not enough teaching nuns to go around. And there has been no "explosion" in vocations to the teaching communities to match the enrollment explosion.

In fact, the numbers of new teaching sisters (and brothers) have remained relatively static—even declining in some parts of the country—in the past 10 years.

And with the "emerging layman" becoming the central focus of the church in the 1960's, this situation may not improve.

For instance, nuns teaching in Boston archdiocesan elementary schools increased only from 2636 to 2651—a total of 15—since 1955.

The real story is at the Catholic high school level where the staffing by nuns jumped from 717 to 929 during these same years.

In short, the extra teaching nuns in recent years have been shifted to the high schools. This follows the general swing in Catholic educational emphasis toward the upper levels.

Religious Orders Join Swing

It has been observed that many Catholic religious orders involved with education have joined this swing, partly (it is said) because high schools are far more productive of new vocations to the orders than elementary schools.

"Let's face it," said one Catholic educator candidly, "you don't get any vocations out of grade schools. Almost every enthusiastic eighth grader wants to be a priest or nun, but most soon forget it."

Another indicator of the growing strength of Catholic high schools is the heavier hiring of lay staff there.

Lay teachers in Boston archdiocesan high schools jumped from 526 to 1284 since 1955—an increase of 758.

This compares with a smaller increase of 334 such teachers (from 133 to 467) at the elementary level.

This reveals an increasingly expensive commitment to beef up Catholic high school education, because not only do high school lay teachers get higher pay, but the education of nuns for this level is more costly.

The Critical Years

Why is the Catholic high school now standing in the spotlight?

One major reason is the evolving concept that teenage years are now more critical in the holding and forming of a workable religious philosophy.

If financial and human resources for education are limited, then it is most important to concentrate on those "idealistic but questioning years" of adolescence and young adulthood.

This argument is stronger in the burgeoning suburbs where the public schools are better and a new generation

of middle-class Catholic parents feel they can keep a closer eye on their children when small than when teenagers.

Interesting in contrast are some pastors in older cities, who are perhaps stronger supporters for maintaining parochial elementary schools. Here the public schools generally aren't as good and the home influence sometimes not as steady.

On the opposite side, one Catholic high school principal commented that "parochial elementary schools are a luxury—and a luxury we can no longer afford."

He added that he could tell little difference in the preparation of pupils coming to his school from both public and parochial elementary schools, either in religious training or general education. (Half came from parochial schools.)

Different Paths

Historically, Catholic elementary schools and high schools have been moving along different paths in recent decades.

Only the elementary level ever attempted to come close to what might be called "mass education." It never achieved, however, the once, stated hope of "a Catholic education for every Catholic Child." (In the Boston archdiocese, this was never a serious aim.)

It is this wider aim of the elementary schools, involving a large number of children, which has generated teaching shortages and financial strain on the supporting parishes.

Parochial elementary schools also were the closest thing to "free" education in the Catholic domain. But in recent years, small tuition charges of $25 to $50 have spread and are going up slowly.

These "parochial" schools have almost entirely been parish-based (a few exceptions are diocesan-built). And now, somewhat like suburban towns, more than half of a typical parish's budget goes to supporting education.

But Catholic high school education has been moving steadily in another direction since World War II.

Post-War Emphasis

Most of the new Catholic high schools built in the Boston archdiocese since 1945 have been:

(1) Regional, drawing students from many towns and parishes, rather than one;

(2) Heavily college preparatory, though with some business and general courses;

(3) Tuition-charging, now up to $450 a year and still rising, so that students' money supports them, not parish funds.

All 16 of the "regional" central diocesan high schools have been built since Cardinal Cushing became bishop in 1944.

They were planned and constructed under his immediate direction with archdiocesan funds. Their operation is directed and financed by the archdiocese.

Some examples are top-rated Archbishop Williams High in Braintree, Bishop Fenwick in Peabody and Marian High in Framingham. The performance of these schools is so good that their graduates are prime targets of college recruiters.

Older Schools Conform

Following this trend, some of the old large parish high schools, such as Malden Catholic or St. Mary's in Lynn, have become actually regional high schools themselves. Tuitions for the many students from outside the parish are higher and going up.

At the same time, most small parish high schools have been wiped out and their students given the opportunity to go to a new "regional" diocesan high school.

Expansion of this new Catholic high school system has, like the elementary level, tapered off.

But it has not stopped. A new regional school is under construction near commutable Rte. 128 in Gloucester, and a high-rise six-story co-educational school is already designed for the Everett area.

Thus the "new Catholic high school," so to speak, has become a different animal: regional, academically selective (most turn away as many as they accept), and financially selective, due to tuitions.

The Goal: College

These schools are more like a string of good independent preparatory schools than any "mass" system of education.

They cater more to the college-bound student than the noncollege-bound, though some have commercial and business programs. Only one, the new Don Bosco High School in Boston, is technical-vocational, and it has an excellent rating. In addition, the cardinal has founded several good secretarial schools, which are tuition-charging too.

Also swinging into the regional trend are new private Catholic high schools, like Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, which are run by orders and financed by student charges.

In summary, it can be said that the upper levels of Catholic education, the high schools like the colleges, have "solved" the critical problems being thrust upon Catholic schools by going "selective" and relatively small.

Their prime focus is on quality rather than quantity operations.

Without Parochial System— New Classrooms for 150,000 Pupils

Any suggestion that Catholic elementary schools might be "phased out" eventually cannot be taken lightly—either by Catholics or non-Catholics.

One reason would be the sheer enormity of absorbing—both physically and financially—parochial school pupils of the Boston archdiocese into the public schools of Eastern Massachusetts.

Why?

Because the Boston archdiocesan school enrollment is approximately 60 percent more than the Boston public school system's.

This means that the 142 cities and towns, from Newburyport to Plymouth, from Boston to Ayer, would have to absorb students for which they could not provide facilities.

It would cause major dislocations over a period of 10 or 20 years unless there was astute local and statewide planning.

It positively could not be done under Massachusetts' present antiquated state-aid-to-schools formula, one of the weakest in the United States—which contributes only 20 percent of local school costs.

Some cities like Salem, with 46 percent of its children in Catholic schools, would be in crisis, but numerous suburbs would have major problems, too.

It would require a new committment to public education and could not be done without further help from the broader state and Federal tax systems.

Take a look at the statistics involved in the potential change-over:

In the 142 cities and towns of the Boston archdiocese, the Catholic schools have 118,876 elementary and 34,297 high school students.

Therefore, for every 100 students now in the public schools of these communities, from 20 to 25 more would be added.

This is the kind of statistic which can make the average school committeeman's hair stand on end.

The potential impact is based on the fact that about 22 percent of all elementary-aged children in Greater Boston are in Catholic schools.

Imagine the situation in other Bay State metropolitan areas where the percentages run higher, including Fall River, 30 percent; Fitchburg-Leominster, 41 percent; Lawrence-Haverhill, 30 percent; Lowell 29 percent, and New Bedford, 24 percent.

(These areas are helped to make Massachusetts' 1960 Catholic school enrollments—totaling 236,000—greater than the public school enrollments of 15 states.)

Furthermore, there are 4670 teachers in the Boston archdicese schools alone—a considerable salary load if their duties were transferred to local public schools.

A 1962 study showed that Boston Archdiocese schools were saving local communities about $57 million. This figure was reached through multiplying their 152,000 enrollment by a conservative per-pupil cost of $375 a year.

Updating the figures in this study reveals a $61 million saving this year.

Similarly, the earlier study demonstrated a statewide saving of $88.5 in educating 236,000 Catholic schoolchildren. This year it would hit $96 million.

The awesome significance of the figure is its exceeding the present $80 million a year which the commonwealth distributes to already hard-pressed local school systems.

The Massachusetts Education Commission is already wondering how the state can raise $100 or $200 million more to make existing public school systems adequate.

The 1985 Projection

Fortunately it is only the eventual "phasing out" of Catholic elementary schools which is receiving any serious discussion.

The new post-World War II system of regional diocesan high schools has become firmly established on a tuition-paying basis.

However, as more lay teachers are hired and tuitions go up from present levels of $300 to $450 annually, the proportion of Catholic youth in them may fall off.

One national survey projection shows 80 to 90 percent of Catholic youth in public high schools by 1985.

Another "cushioning" element in any de-emphasis of Catholic elementary schools would be a certain number remaining open as private tuition-paying schools. There are now 30 such institutions, out of 245 grade schools in the diocese.

But these schools would find, as new Catholic high schools are discovering, they would have to compete in quality with the best public schools.

"Catholics are becoming more and more critical of Catholic schools, because they've become better educated themselves," a Catholic high school principal commented recently.

"They are increasingly taking the attitude that they won't send their children to a Catholic school unless it has as good an academic program as other schools, as well as inculcating a solid philosophy."

This observation underlines the evolving Catholic position that it is better to have a smaller educational system of excellence than a growing one of decreasing quality.

Boom in Cardinal Cushing Era

How did the Boston archdiocesan school system reach its present imposing size?

Easily the greatest single period of expansion has been since World War II—and, at the same time, since Cardinal Cushing first became archbishop in 1944. The two facts are significant.

The words "imposing size" are accurate, even if Greater Boston has a lower percentage of its Catholic children in Catholic schools than most large United States metropolitan areas.

The system, covering 142 cities and towns, has 245 elementary and 101 high schools, though most are smaller than corresponding public schools.

It has 118,876 elementary and 34,297 high school pupils, plus 17,178 students in six colleges—a total of 170,351 students.

But the truly striking figure is 120 new schools built in Cardinal Cushing's post-World War II era.

Why this great burst in building?

Two reasons.

1. The 83 new elementary schools are testimony largely to the post-World War II population explosion and the mass move to the suburbs.

2. The 34 new high schools (plus three secretarial schools) symbolize Cardinal Cushing's recognition that Catholic education in an advancing technological society must swing its emphasis toward the upper levels.

Not one of the 16 new regional diocesan high schools now dotting Greater Boston existed before he became archbishop.

Further evidence of the Cardinal's special focus on upper-level education was his founding of three new colleges, Merrimack, Cardinal Cushing and Newton College of the Sacred Heart, and his reputation nationally as the leading United States cardinal in aid to higher education.

In short, the postwar pressure to expand elementary schools came from Catholic lay people, parents and some

pastors, while official archdiocesan thinking lay more in the direction of secondary and higher education.

There are some signs that Catholic parents are beginning to swing more toward the cardinal's thinking, moved by the same economic pressures to provide more good high school and university education.

In fact, increasing numbers in those suburbs which have good public school systems are thinking in terms of sending their children to public elementary school and then switching to Catholic high schools and/or colleges.

Guidance in Adolescence

This traces again the evolving concept that a parent can keep a fairly close eye on his youngster in elementary school years, but that some outside moral assistance is needed in the adolescent and young adult years.

If the Catholic high school can offer a quality academic program, as many are, plus a solid philosophical point of view, then this fits the bill.

Looking at the same question from another point of view, that of staffing the expanding high school and college levels, Cardinal Cushing commented in a recent year:

"I don't see how we can possibly provide funds for an educational system from the elementary to the university level. We could never find trained religious teachers to staff such a system of education."

But at the same time he continues to expand and improve Catholic education at the high school and college and university levels.

He also has helped to improve and expand public higher education in very recent years for both Catholics (in this Catholic-majority state) and non-Catholics by publicly backing the establishment of a University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1961 and a University of Massachusetts campus in Greater Boston this year. (Furthermore he helped finance a large, new $750,000 Newman Center on the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus.)

This is not to say that Cardinal Cushing who (not the archdiocesan school department) has the final say about school expansion, has not helped in the postwar elementary school expansion.

He has helped, particularly in setting up expanded financing methods, and requiring architectural and size

standards which have led to a more solid parish elementary system. And these steps have cut down on unsound expansion, too.

The Diocesan Bank

The cardinal established in 1954 a chancery depository which was basically a diocesan banking system for the local parishes.

It provided very low-interest loans under which, from that date, all parish school buildings were constructed.

Operating at about 1 percent below commercial bank rates, it saved the archdiocesan parishes over $350,000 in the first year. It is now saving $750,000 a year and is improving all the time.

A by product of this system was giving the cardinal tighter control over school expansion. It prevented repetition of some past local parish mistakes in which schools were built in wrong locations and still have empty classrooms.

Continuing long-time policy, the local pastor had to demonstrate to the diocese that he had 50 percent of the school building cost already in hand, plus solid plans to raise the rest and also build a convent for the teaching sisters.

He also was required to have the land, or ability to acquire it; but a new requirement was that the architect must meet with the chancery's approval.

Thus the chancery's role, begun in 1948 and tightened in 1954, is to loan the money and approve repayment plans, review all preliminary progress and final building plans, conduct major bidding and finally conclude the contracts, which the cardinal signs.

In brief, the archdiocese controls every aspect of parish elementary school expansion, though the parishes themselves pay for it.

The advantages of the program are that it takes a burden off the pastors, gives them expert assistance, helps them get better prices (often through large-scale buying of such things as school furnishing) and prevents "some of the monsterous mistakes of the past," as one church official put it.

To complete the picture, new high school construction —now concentrated on regional diocesan high schools—is done by Cardinal Cushing himself, independent of the archdiocese school office and even the chancery.

For instance, he alone has made plans for a new "high-rise" central high school, which will be coeducational and located in Everett at the core of heavily populated northern metropolitan Boston.

No More Parish Highs

No more parish high schools will be constructed, while many of the older small ones have been consolidated into regional high schools.

One final requirement of any pastor who wants to build an elementary school is that he himself must line up the nuns to teach in it and conclude a contract with a teaching community.

This in itself has put a "brake" on elementary school expansion because teaching sisters are so hard to find.

The increasing practice of looking afar for such teachers was exemplified two years ago when St. Colman's Church in Brockton had to go out of state to find the Congregation of the Sisters Marianite of Holy Cross to staff its school.

Perhaps the most significant action which the cardinal has taken was in 1958, when he ruled that no more eight-room, eight-grade parish schools would be allowed to be built.

He established the policy that henceforth the minimum must be a 16-room school, with space for two classes at each grade level.

So rapidly was the suburban population expanding that he felt the larger-sized school was necessary to handle at least 50 percent of the children of the parish.

Cardinal Cushing saw that the time was quickly approaching when the eight-room school would have only 25 percent of the parish children. Such a small percentage, he felt, would be a "divisive factor" in the parish supporting the school operation.

This new larger requirement lent some "braking" effect to launching of new schools unless they met the needs of a larger percentage of the parish children.

But the issue may well become critical again in a very few years.

Already many parishes have a diminishing percentage of youngsters in the parish who can attend, and some parents are becoming restive.

Whether the archdiocese will want to face another major round of increasingly costly expansion at the elemen-

tary level, while high school and college education gains mounting attention, remains to be seen.

Are Parochials Keeping Pace?

Almost half of the total religious manpower—including sisters, brothers and priests—of the Boston archdiocese is committed fulltime to education in Catholic schools.

This is a herioc commitment to the cause of education.

Some 3905 out of the archdiocese's total of 8911 priests, brothers and sisters are in Catholic schools alone, not even counting the college level.

Despite this great effort, their numbers are not growing substantially, while the Catholic population increase is studded with such startling statistics as 50,206 infant baptisms and only 18,147 deaths in Greater Boston for last year alone.

The slack is taken up by lay teachers, whose percentage on Greater Boston's Catholic school facilities has jumped from 1 in 25 to 1 out of 5 since World War II.

In the face of such pressures and change, it is a fair question to ask:

Is Catholic education improving?

The answer is yes, except in the critical areas of too-large classes and too-low pay for the rising number of lay teachers.

Catholic education, generally speaking, has kept pace with curriculum revolutions and other improvements which have transformed public education in the past decade.

In fact, Catholic schools have been under fire from some Catholics because they are "too much like" the public schools. By such critics, they are only given an "edge" over the public schools because of their private school advantage of being able to toss out troublesome students.

The 20-Year Drive

Catholic schools have made a greater effort in the last 20 years to improve their general academic fields than their religion courses—and again have fallen under criticism for this.

How was this possible, this academic leap forward?

To many, who years ago saw the nun leading her class to morning recess as a symbol of the isolation of Catholic education, today's "in-touch" modernity may seem surprising.

The walls of separation have been tumbling down, and for no one, relatively speaking, more than the teaching sisters—once so withdrawn.

Teaching nuns all must have bachelor's degrees, both for elementary and secondary teaching. Many are "on leave" from their communities to attend colleges and universities all over the country to get masters and doctorates for high school and college teaching.

Strict rules of their communities have been necessarily loosened in this change-over, though some feel even greater flexibility is required to meet the quickening professional and intellectual pace, especially at the high school level.

Sister Formation Movement

It all started 10 years ago, long before Pope John's revolution, with the so-called Sister Formation Movement, which was really a wide-range program to upgrade radically the educational background and professional preparation of teaching nuns.

For instance, the two largest teaching communities in Greater Boston are the Congregation of St. Joseph, staffing 75 elementary and 21 high schools and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, servicing 38 elementary and 18 high schools.

How many people know that every sister of St. Joseph now earns a B.A. from Regis College, or that every Sister of Notre Dame de Namur is an Emmanuel College graduate? (Unless she already has a degree when she joins the community.)

Smaller communities which have no college of their own, like the Sisters of Providence, now educate their nuns at Boston College or other such universities.

Some are even setting up their own colleges for such training purposes, but most Catholic higher educators frown on this as a splintering of effort, resources and probably quality.

The Taste for Teaching

So extensive is this higher education movement that it is causing right now a further shortage (through temporary) of nuns in the crowded classrooms.

Still another side effect is that a growing number of sisters, especially younger ones, are through this advanced education developing a taste for teaching at high school and even college level—thus contributing again to the elementary teaching shortage.

A second major factor in the post-World War II academic leap forward was the attempt to "firm up" the Boston archdiocese as a true school system, rather than a scattered collection of schools.

Now there is a common archdiocesan-wide elementary and high school curriculum, regardless of the teaching community involved; also a common testing service, tied in at the high school level with the College Entrance Examination Board tests.

A professional staff, both clerical and lay, coordinates these efforts at the Archdiocese Education Office, in an elegant old Back Bay mansion at 486 Beacon st., directing there numerous expert services. Several top reading clinics are available for local school use.

Control Not Strong Enough?

Some criticism remains that archdiocesan control is still not strong enough, especially in raising standards in some local parish schools. But overall, great strides have been made.

The centralizing trend has occurred under the past three diocesan school superintendents: Rt. Rev. Corneluis Sherlock, Rt. Rev. Timothy O'Leary, and now Rt. Rev. Albert W. Low.

Msgr. Low, who took over two years ago, views keeping up with new curriculum developments as one of the vital functions of his office's leadership.

"Our duty is to distinguish between needed changes and 'fads'," says Msgr. Low. "On this point I have no reservations about our schools' shift to the "new mathematics' in the past three years,"

While the superintendent's office leads in academic matters and gives increasing help in recruitment of lay teachers, it has nothing to do with building construction,

which lies completely with the cardinal, the chancery and the local pastors.

The New View—TV

Perhaps the most dramatic new role of the central archdiocese is the new Catholic television station, WIHS, Channel 38, whose powerful transmitter is beaming out from the "New Boston's" highest skyscraper, the Prudential Tower in the Back Bay.

This imaginative educational-commercial combination of a TV station, first of its kind nationally to go on the air, will package general education courses (complementing, not competing with Channel 2) to both Catholic and public schools.

Uniquely financed by separate afternoon and nighttime commercial programming, it will also broadcast special religion courses for adults and Catholic youngsters not attending Catholic schools.

The academic payoff for these varied efforts of the past 20 years is an updated, modernized archdiocese-wide curriculum in reading (phonetics have been re-emphasized), science. mathematics, social studies, grade-level French and religion in the elementary schools.

The story is the same at the high school. Look at the program, and you find it permeated with the new M.I.T.-originated P.S.S.C. physics, modern CHEMS chemistry and B.S.C.S. biology

(For the still unitiated, P.S.S.C. stands for Physical Sciences Study Group; CHEMS for Chemical Education Material Study, and B.S.C.S. for Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. All represent a revolutionary joint school-university rewriting of these subjects.)

Another Study Goal: Languages

The typical sharp new "regional" Catholic high school is also deep in language study with some offering four years each of Latin, French and German and three of Russian.

Such subjects as economics, economic world geography, trigonometry, analytical geometry and function theory, engineering drawing and earth science punctuate the curriculum, too.

A number of Catholic high school are offering some elective business courses also, plus industrial arts, but

the main thrust of the secondary schools is still college-preparatory. Several secretarial schools have been established, and Don Bosco High School (for boys) in Boston is a first-rate technical-vocational school in which the humanities get more than a brush.

In a final capsule glance, the better Catholic schools are making a valiant effort, as are the better public schools, to keep their programs apace with the mushrooming "knowledge explosion" of the 20th century's second half.

How effectively they can teach these increasingly difficult programs in the future, unless the current pressures creating too-large classes are reduced, is another question.

A Need... and a Drive For Greater Excellence In Education

Is Catholic education out of balance—especially for the 1960's and the years ahead?

Are Catholics still devoting too many resources to elementary schools when high schools, colleges and university graduate work are the keys to modern society?

For many, perhaps even a majority involved in Catholic secondary and higher education, the answer is now "Yes."

There are several reasons given, but two particularly focus upon the strength of the Church itself in the emerging, fast-changing second half of the 20th century.

First, Catholic high schools are far more productive of vocations to the priesthood and sisters and brothers communities than any other level of Catholic education.

They might therefore be considered a key to Church strength, though public schools, especially in Greater Boston, have also been remarkably productive.

Furthermore, a good high school education is now mandatory, either for a career, or especially in preparation for college.

Secondly, excellent Catholic colleges and universities are needed to educate a much more highly-trained lay population for professions and careers in an increasingly complex society.

They are required also to provide future teachers, in greatly expanded numbers, for both Catholic and non-Catholic institutions.

In short, the invigorating of the Catholic Church—as well as American society—is argued to depend much more heavily on good secondary and higher education than on maintaining a separate expensive system of parochial elementary schools.

The Supply... and Demand

If there were enough resources, both human and financial, to go around, then those suggesting the closing

of Catholic elementary schools would probably not propose it—at least on these grounds.

But their argument is that Catholics as a group simply cannot afford separate and first-rate education at all levels.

Education today is too expensive, and it gets radically more expensive the higher you go. The pre-student cost almost doubles from elementary to high school level, and triples again at college level.

Catholic colleges and universities are seeking to become superior institutions, but the fact is that, as a group, they have not yet achieved this status.

For instance, one yardstick of quality among United States colleges and universities is whether an institution is chartered to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter.

While 173 of the nation's 1800 institutions of high learning are authorized to award Phi Beta Kappa keys, only four Catholic colleges are in this group (Catholic University, Fordham, Georgetown, and the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul.

At the same time, Catholic universities do not yet have the depth in graduates studies to produce enough doctoral candidates (either clerical or lay) to replenish their own faculties.

But the trend is definitely upward.

A dozen larger Catholic institutions, such as Boston College, are making strong bids to become top-flight universities. They have enhanced themselves academically and are attracting top students in bigger bunches than ever dreamed of before.

Other institutions like Emmanuel College have also been experiencing the academic "boom" at the small liberal arts college level.

A major key to the success of this trend is more money, plus a general Catholic population focused on improved higher education.

Certainly the mounting interest is there, as the rocketing statistics since World War II reveal.

There were in 1944 only 2300 students in three Catholic colleges in the Boston archdiocese.

Ten years later, enrollment leaped to 10,627 as Cardinal Cushing had assisted in the establishment of three more colleges.

The new institutions were Merrimack College, in North Andover, the first fully co-educational Catholic col-

lege in this area; Cardinal Cushing College, in Brookline, and Newton College of the Sacred Heart. Meantime, the others had expanded and B.C. became partly co-educational.

The 1954 enrollment has nearly doubled again, having reached more than 18,000 men and women this September. This is seven times greater than the campus population at the end of World War II.

Numbers alone don't count, however.

The "quality" trend has been in evidence for several years now. Boston College's Class of 1964 revealed it dramatically when 84 percent entered or planned graduate work, with 25 percent shooting for doctorates or professional degrees.

This rapid upgrading has also persuaded many Catholics of this generation to go to Catholic colleges, rather than to Ivy League and other such institutions as a good many did in the last generation, with the Kennedys as a prime example.

'Where Are Catholic Salks?'

Catholic colleges were goaded into their current spurt by several years of stinging self-criticism.

"Where are the Catholic Salks, Oppenheimers and Einsteins?" asked one Catholic college president a few years ago. "Where are our intellectuals?" he added.

Very Rev. Michael P. Walsh, S.J., looking over Boston College's recent classes, was able to say with confidence a short while ago, "Now they're coming."

Similar trends of expansion and improvement have been hitting Catholic high schools in the past 20 years.

Catholic high school enrollment in Greater Boston has jumped more than 100 percent, while elementary school attendance has increased 50 percent.

Catholic elementary schools, of course, were much larger to begin with, but on the other side of the picture, high school operations are almost twice as expensive.

To cite figures: in 1944, there were 16,922 students enrolled in the Boston archdiocese's 86 Catholic high schools; 20 years later, there are 101 high schools educating 34,215 boys and girls.

Again the quality has gone way up. Many more are being prepared well for college and advanced graduate study.

A small portion of this trend, but one which is revealing of newer Catholic thinking, has to do with the greater interest of the teaching orders and communities in secondary education.

"I think it's in the minds of the leaders of these orders that if they had a high school or academy, they could get more vocations," said one influential Boston Catholic educator.

"Catholic colleges used to be productive of vocations," commented another, "but not so much any more. Now the secondary level, the high schools, are the most frutiful.

"However," he added, "vocations generally are going down slightly in New England and Boston—and declining even more in the rest of the United States. I believe it's because more vocations in the past came from lower income families, and we just have fewer of them."

These are the conflicting currents in Catholic education today—at the elementary, secondary and higher education levels.

There is no agreement among Catholic educators, but the discussion is sharpening in the face of expanding enrollments with limited human and financial resources.

The arguments, once behind the scenes but now breaking out into the open, focus closely around the question:

Should Catholics restrict or drop their elementary schools to improve high schools and colleges which, some believe, better prepare Catholic youth for the moral challenges and educational demands of the 1960's?

New Approach To Non-Parochials

Do parochial school-educated youngsters become better Catholics and citizens than Catholic children attending public schools?

This is a critical question in the emerging debate on the future of Catholic education.

But it is matched by an equally important second question: Can Catholic children be given a good religious training without using parochial schools?

Once again, these are not far-out academic querries.

One projection shows the trend that by 1985, from 80 to 90 percent of Catholic high school students will be in public schools. Perhaps two-thirds of Catholic elementary youngsters will be in the same position.

Thus the answers to the above questions are vital.

So far there is no definitive answer to the first question, and perhaps there never can be. But in recent years, the initial concrete sociological studies have been made.

Though not conclusive, they tend to show that Catholic schools produce more dutiful and doctrinely knowledgeable Catholic adults.

But membership in church organizations is no greater, which one study said "will surprise many clergy who have felt that the Catholic school graduates are the backbone of any parish."

The above findings come from a Carnagie-financed study by a National Opinion Center research team headed by Rev. Andrew M. Greeley, a priest-sociologist from Chicago.

"Social Awareness" Findings

On the other hand, a Notre Dame University study testing for "social awareness" found that Catholic graduates of public schools "consistently showed themselves more socially alert and interested than products of Catholic schools."

It made the further finding that a larger proportion of Catholic-public school graduates have increased their in-

terest in religious issues during the past 10 years than parochial school graduates.

This study of high school graduates was made by Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., chairman of Loyola University's sociology department who headed a team of Notre Dame researchers. Their earlier study of the elementary level was reported in Fichter's book, "Parochial School."

Fr. Fichter undertook his studies on the effect of Catholic and public school educations on Catholics because of what he called "an appalling lack of empirical evidence on both sides of the argument."

Morality and Conduct

In moral areas, the Greeley and Fichter studies had somewhat different, though not necessarily conflicting, findings.

Fr. Greeley found somewhat more strict sexual morality and conformity to the Church's ideas on family planning among Catholic school graduates.

However, in probing the standards of conduct among Catholic youngsters themselves in both parochial and public schools, Fr. Fichter concluded:

"There appears to be little difference between the parochial and public school children in their standards of conduct.

"The children in both schools accept and demonstrate, in about the same proportions . . . honesty, obedience, gratitude, self-control and kindliness."

In another moral area, Fr. Greeley uncovered an "interesting comparison" between attitudes on racial justice and sexual morality.

Although the teaching of the Church is clear on both, and Catholic school graduates accept the Church's right to teach on both, he noted, teaching on race has not had "the relative effectiveness" in the thought and actions of Catholic school graduates.

In contrast, Fr. Fichter found no difference in the two groups' awareness of, and interest in, the problems of race relations in the United States.

Fr. Fichter concludes his high school study of "social awareness" by asking his fellow Catholics a significant question:

"We continue to assume that our teen-agers are better off, get a better education, become better citizens in

a Catholic high school than in a public high school, but what do we really know about the results of our secondary educational system and the forces at work to effect these results?"

The Greeley study takes a somewhat different tone. If the goal of the Catholic school in the first half of the century was to turn out loyal practicing Catholics—and if, as his survey indicates, these goals have been substantially attained—then perhaps, Fr. Greeley suggests, the schools now can be redirected to meet today's needs.

There is increasing evidence, however, that the Church is placing more and more emphasis on outside-of-parochial school religious training to reach the ever-expanding numbers of Catholic youth.

A certain realism supports this trend, because in the Boston archdiocese alone only 154,000 out of an estimated 440,000 Catholic school-age youngsters are in Catholic schools.

The remaining 285,000 children, who are about 65 percent of the total, are enrolled in public schools.

With parochial school expansion now almost stopped, while the Catholic population continues to grow rapidly, this out-of-Catholic-school percentage will naturally rise.

The Old "Sunday School"

In the past non-parochial school youngsters received what religious education they obtained in the old "Sunday schools," which came under a rain of criticism as being "inadequate."

Operated only for public-school children of the parish (since the parochial school pupils got religious study there), the impression was sometimes imparted—though not intentionally so—to these youngsters that they were somehow in a "second class" status.

Generally speaking, not many lay people were involved in teaching, with the pastor handling the high school students, while the teaching sisters (if the parish had a school) took care of the elementary pupils.

But at the same time, many Catholic educators admit, religious instruction in the parochial schools themselves was not much better. There was simply more of it.

However, all this has been changing rapidly in the last few years.

Religious education—its techniques and teaching materials—has undergone a revolution not unlike the radical curriculum changes which have hit all education since World War II.

For Catholics this has meant de-emphasizing the abstract and theoretical question-and-answer drill of the catechism, and now bringing religious and moral issues down into the concrete terms of young people's daily life.

It is a much more "student-centered" approach, encouraging real moral commitment on the youth's part. It stresses meanings rather than forms, down-to-earth messages rather than strict definitions.

Paralleling this teaching transformation was the rise nationally in the Catholic churches of vastly improved "high schools of religion" and "elementary schools of religion" to replace the old Sunday schools.

The chief instrument nationally for building these new "schools of religion" for public-school Catholic children has been the revitalized Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, its own staffing replenished by numerous young and imaginative priests and nuns.

In many places throughout the country, these "schools of religion"—starting with fewer traditional restrictions—adopted the new religious teaching techniques faster than the parochial schools.

Here in Boston the movement hit late, but in the past two years it has picked up dramatic momentum. Boston has already become one of the leading archdioceses in this change.

Within this short span, the "schools of religion" effort is believed to have jumped almost 50 percent.

Working with "released time" from public schools plus out-of-school hours, nearly 250,000 public-school Catholic youngsters are now enrolled in the Boston archdiocese instruction.

But perhaps the most significant development is the mass involvement of lay adults as teachers. Last year the figure hit 8000, in addition the 2000 priests and nuns, for a 10,000 teaching staff.

Rev. Russell Novello, director of the Boston archdiocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the past year, expects further advances this Fall, hopefully enrolling most of the 285,000 public-school Catholic youth.

He is the first director to be assisted by an actual staff, four nuns (Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart) and an assistant, Rev. Peter Regan, all operating out of a humming group of offices in the chancery building in Brighton.

But the key to whole effort is organization and the involvement of new thousands of adults throughout the diocese as (1) teachers; (2) helpers, who aid with non-teaching school chores, and (3) "fishers," who visit homes to encourage more youngsters to participate.

In addition, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is continually expanding its program for adult religious literacy and interest, because this is considered a vital backstop to youth training.

'Catechetical Centers"

In brief, the Catholic Church is evolving a remarkable new system of religious education.

Perhaps it is a sign of the times that several Greater Boston parishes unable to support parochial schools have recently built small "catechetical centers" of a few classrooms in which to conduct their "schools of religion."

The Rochester, N.Y., diocese has gone farthest with this development, already having built 26 such centers, some of them next to public schools for easy access by their Catholic pupils during "released time" religious classes.

For a growing number of Catholics, this development looks like a fruitful alternative in providing solid religious education for their children.

U.S. Aid Won't Ease Decision for Parochials

Is Federal aid to Catholic schools the big answer? If it came in the next few years, what would be the consequences?

These are questions which Catholics today must ponder even more seriously than non-Catholics.

For if the Catholic world has shifted in the Pope John and Kennedy years to the point where the question "Are parochial schools still necessary?" can be asked, the other side has softened, too.

Opponents of Federal aid to Catholic schools, despite the still-hard facade of their official position, are not so adamant today.

Some Catholic educators believe that any Federal aid program ever passed would be limited, and thus should be focused toward improving Catholic education—cutting class sizes, improving lay salaries, replacing old buildings—rather than expanding it in an attempt to keep pace with a growing Catholic population.

"Federal aid would never allow expansion to the extent of giving every Catholic child a Catholic education," said one.

Suburban Attitude

A rising number of Catholics are either advocating or considering the long term "phasing out" of parochial elementary schools and concentrating this Federal aid—if it comes—on quality high school and college education.

This is particularly true of parents who live in suburbs or communities where the public schools are good.

It is more often in the cities, where the public schools have greater problems and the parochial school enrollment is more selective, that some parents prefer the parochial elementary schools.

But here the situation could change, too, as city schools get increasing attention and aid from state and Federal governments.

In Massachusetts the $250,000 "master plan" commission for Bay State public education expects to provide to

the 1965 Legislature a multi-million dollar aid program aimed strongly at improving education in our larger cities. And President Johnson's inclination lies in this direction also.

U.S. Comr. of Education Francis Keppel, the former Harvard School of Education dean who carries a lot of weight in Washington educational discussions, has moved around to the idea of shooting Federal aid at specific targets—curriculum reform work, special teacher training, higher salaries for career teachers, new programs in urban slum areas.

Though he has not abandoned his long-time respect for local initiative in education, he now believes there's a vital area for Federal initiative. His mostly-successful 1963 education bill reflected this.

On top of this, the National Education Assn., public education's biggest official organization and Washington lobby, may now be swinging around to a similar position—partly as the result of the church school-aid deadlock which has helped block any general aid program.

Expansion Brings Problems

However, even if Federal aid were to come eventually without strings—strictly on an unspecified per-pupil basis, Catholics themselves would face a major decision.

A major expansion of Catholic schools could create as many financial problems as Federal aid was intended to solve.

This is because Federal aid would finance only a part of any expansion, with Catholics picking up the major cost of it.

And big education today is big business, with ballooning administrative headaches and a Pandora's box of future financial commitments.

It could open the gates to expansion which would wipe out hoped-for attempts to reduce class sizes, make the growing number of lay teachers' salaries competative and improve equipment and teaching materials.

For instance, salaries for lay teachers in Catholic schools are still low, even in the face of rising public-school teachers salaries.

The average salary for lay Catholic elementary teachers in the Boston archdiocese is pegged at a flat $3500 to $4500 level (with some at $2500), while the state's legal

STARTING minimum for public school teachers is $4500 ($5000 next year).

There is no rising annual schedule to $7200 or $8500 as in the public schools.

At the Catholic high school level, the picture is about the same. Most lay salaries are in the flat $4500 to $5200 range, with some at $4200. Some top-paying schools reach $7500.

Salary Goal Difficult

The cardinal has urged all schools to attempt to meet both the state's legal minimum for public school teachers, and the salaries of the local public schools. But despite a heroic effort it has generally not been possible.

This, then, is just one vital area where any Federal aid might have to go, rather than to expand Catholic schools.

One further point on Federal aid: There is no unanimity among Catholic bishops on the subject. And bishops being supreme in their own dioceses, will have the final say on acceptance.

"One-third of the bishops are for Federal aid, one-third are against it and one-third are indifferent," says Rt. Rev. Frederick G. Hochwalt of Washington, D. C., leading spokesman of the influential National Catholic Welfare Conference.

He further estimates that Catholic laymen are about evenly divided on the issue.

Cardinal Cushing's position is a middle one. He is not pushing for Federal aid, but would accept it. But he would insist on his diocese and its parishes owning and maintaining their own school buildings, using any outside aid only to improve education inside them.

As far as state aid to Catholic and other private schools is concerned (outside of provided busing and lunch programs), it is specifically unconstitutional in Massachusetts and most other states.

Thus the great Catholic school systems of the United States is facing an historic watershed.

Decade of Decision

A series of groundswell developments are coming together in the 1960's to create a crisis for which there appears to be no long-term solution.

This crisis is showing its initial effects in Massachusetts and New England now, somewhat behind the national trend. It may come to a head within this decade.

While there seems to be no simple "solution," there is a possible historic adjustment.

It is already taking place. It is a shift in emphasis from the parochial elementary schools to the growing demands for high schools and university education.

It is a painful adjustment for many Catholics, while others welcome it as a sign of Catholic advancement in American society, the fruits of a long successful struggle.

The parochial elementary school system has deep emotional roots in the American Catholic mind.

In its sheer size, its human commitment and historic success, it is unique in the world.

Some have called it an "historic accident" because of its uniqueness in the United States alone. It was born out of the anti-Catholic Protestant atmosphere of theAmerican public schools of the second half of the 19th century, a climate which no longer exists.

It was built out of two things, a devout faith on the part of millions of immigrating Catholics and their belief in good education to become productive Americans.

It has succeeded. Now a growing number of American Catholics feel that, just as an epoch is ending and beginning in the worldwide Catholic church, a similar cycle is completing itself in the American Catholic school system.

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